

Description

LOW IMPACT BATON FOR TAPOTEMENT AND DISCIPLINE TRAINING

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a non-provisional application which claims the benefit of the commonly owned copending provisional application entitled "LOW IMPACT BATON FOR TAPOTEMENT AND DISCIPLINE TRAINING", filed December 12, 2002, bearing U.S. Ser. No. 60/432,841 and naming Steven Robyor, the named inventor herein, as sole inventor, the contents of which is specifically incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

[0002] Technical Field

[0003] The present invention relates to impact devices. In particular, it relates to a soft hand-held baton which can be used to apply low impact striking for the purpose of tapotement, and/or for the purpose of discipline training.

[0004] Background of the Invention

[0005] Tapotement, the use of low impact striking, has been used for a wide variety of applications such as massage therapy, animal training, and discipline training. Typically, the hands of the masseuse were used to strike selected surfaces on the massage recipient. However, during this process, it was not uncommon for the masseuse to inadvertently injure his or her hands. It would be desirable to have a method of avoiding injury to either the masseuse during administration of a massage.

[0006] In addition to potentially injuring the masseuse, prior art techniques could also result in injury to the massage recipient. For example, if the masseuse was not careful, the massage recipient could be bruised as a result of striking that occurs during the massage. It would be desirable to have a method of avoiding injury to the massage recipient due to improper striking by the masseuse.

[0007] In addition to massage therapy, tapotement is also used to train animals. Usually, this would be done using the trainer's hand, or a device such as a rolled up newspaper. As was the case above, improper striking can lead to injury of the trainer or the animal. It would be desirable to have a method of using tapotement techniques to train

animals that would not result in injury to either the trainer or the animal.

[0008] Tapotement techniques can also be used for discipline training. In particular, it can be used as a replacement for spanking when disciplining children. In traditional spanking, the same risk of injury exists for the parent and child that existed for the masseuse and massage recipient, discussed above. It would be desirable to have a method of disciplining children that would be effective, yet avoid any injury to the parent or the child.

[0009] The prior art has failed to provide a tapotement device that is an effective striking instrument, but avoids injury to the individual applying the tapotement or to the recipient.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

[0010] The present invention solves problems related to tapotement and discipline training by providing a hand held pliant flexible baton having an external shell fabricated from a pliant material which covers an internal core fabricated from a soft batting material. The baton is constructed such that it avoids any actual physical damage when used. The flexible baton's external shell provides a low impact force when struck against tissue such that no damage is

inflicted to tissue, but a stinging sensation can be felt. The baton can accomplish several functions, such as use as a tapotement device for massage therapy, use as a training device for domestic animals such as dogs, or use as a safe disciplinary device for children in lieu of spanking.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

- [0011] Figure 1 illustrates a perspective view of a preferred embodiment of the low impact baton.
- [0012] Figure 2 illustrates a cross-sectional end view of a preferred embodiment of the low impact baton.
- [0013] Figure 3 illustrates an alternative preferred embodiment which has an optional cord attachment on the end of the low impact baton.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

- [0014] Prior to a detailed discussion of the figures, a definition of terms, and a general overview of the low impact baton and its method of use will be presented.
- [0015] For the purposes of this disclosure, the following definitions are used. The term "tapotement" is used to describe a percussion oriented massage that involves striking soft tissue with repetitive blows delivered in rapid succession.

The repetitive blows can be in the form of gentle or hard impacts, and can vary in terms of speed. The term "discipline" will be used to describe the process of training that corrects, molds, or affects the mental faculties or moral character. Discipline can be used in conjunction with humans or animals. The term "violence" is used to describe an excessive exertion of physical force which results in physical harm or injury. The term "punishment" is used to describe a retributive act which results in suffering, pain or loss. The term "harm" is used to indicate physical or mental damage. The term "spank" is used to indicate a form of discipline where a child is struck, usually on the buttocks.

[0016] In regard to tapotement, this type of massage is commonly used to stimulate nerve endings below the skin, to relieve stress, and to stimulate blood flow to the muscles. The prior art use of tapotement is a technique that involves rapid and successive striking of the soft tissue of an individual's body. The location, intensity, and speed can vary widely from one massage therapist to another. There are numerous physical benefits to the process, including stimulation of blood flow and tissue health which the improved blood flow provides. However, there are also

disadvantages to the prior art tapotement method.

[0017] One disadvantage associated with prior art tapotement techniques is that bony structures in the hands of the massage therapist may occasionally impact areas where the patient has bone structures underlying the skin. The reason for this is that the location where bone masses collide may result in the soft tissue between the two bone masses being damaged. As a result, it is important to avoid this type of impact so that the benefits of the massage are not outweighed by actual tissue damage. The soft pliable baton provided by the invention eliminates this problem by avoiding collisions between two soft tissue covered bone masses.

[0018] Another disadvantage of prior art tapotement techniques is that the greater repetitive motion required by application of tapotement via hand impact can lead to other problems for the massage therapist, such as carpal tunnel syndrome, due to the constant repetitive motion used by the massage therapist during the course of a day's work. The extended length of the baton reduces the possibility of carpal tunnel syndrome and/or other repetitive motion injuries by reducing the amount of motion required to give a tapotement massage, and by avoiding impact dam-

age to the massage therapist's hands.

[0019] The low impact baton provided by the invention is also useful for the purpose of training animals. This is especially true when an animal, such as a dog, is being toilet trained. Historically, most pets are first toilet trained using newspapers. Many pet owners make the common mistake of using rolled up newspapers to discipline a dog during the toilet training process, while at the same time attempting to train the dog to use a newspaper. This confuses the dog, because they associate the newspaper with the discipline device. As a result, they may often avoid using the newspaper because they have a fear of newspapers instilled in them due to the newspaper's dual use as a discipline device.

[0020] In addition to problems of confusion caused by the dual use of a newspaper, there is also a problem which occurs when disciplining an animal, because they often have no idea what they did wrong, nor do they understand why they are being punished. As a result, physical discipline of an animal is not recommended. A more effective method is the striking of the low impact baton on the owner's hands. This does not involve physical punishment, but instead uses loud noises in combination with the visual aid

of the baton striking the owner's hand. This visible and audible demonstration has been found to be effective in modifying a dog's behavior. Likewise, in the event that the flexible baton is used to spank a dog for a particular type of undesired behavior, the flexible baton will not inflict any harm on the dog.

[0021] In addition to foregoing benefits of using the baton, there is another benefit provided by the baton in that the dog will associate the baton with discipline rather than the human hand. As a result, the dog will not flinch when being petted. This results in a reduction of stress for the animal. When using the flexible baton, the dog can be disciplined without inflicting any harm on it, the dog will not associate the training device with the paper it is supposed to use, and the dog will not associate the owner's hand with discipline. As a result, the baton provides multiple benefits over the prior art when training an animal.

[0022] Another application for the flexible baton is to use it to discipline a child without conventional spanking. Many parents will spank their children for unwanted behavior. However, they run the risk of doing actual physical harm to the child due to impact injuries. These impact injuries can occur, just as they might occur with prior art tapote-

ment techniques, when a child is spanked by a much larger and more powerful adult. The advantage of the flexible baton disclosed herein is that it ensures that when a child is spanked, it results in a child being disciplined without violence and without harm. This is because the soft pliant structure of the baton eliminates the risk of any actual harm or violence. In addition, it would only produce a stinging sensation which encourages a child to be better behaved, but does not rise to the level of punishment where a child would actually suffer due to the spanking.

[0023] As can be seen, the device has multiple uses, all of which are related to the delivery of a safe, low force impact to an individual or to an animal which eliminates the risk of any actual harm to the individual or animal being impacted, or even to the individual delivering the impact. When used in combination with tapotement massage therapy, the device prevents bone on bone collisions which may result in tissue damage, and it reduces the possibility of repetitive motion injuries. When used in combination with animal training, it eliminates the confusion created when a newspaper is used as the discipline device at the same time the animal is being trained to use a newspaper for toilet purposes (i.e., housebreaking), it eliminates the fear of the

owner's hand in cases where the owner spans the dog by hand, and it eliminates any possibility that the dog will be harmed during discipline training. When used as a device for spanking a child, the soft baton 1 avoids any physical harm which can often occur as a result of spanking a child. The soft baton 1 may even be used as an adult oriented discipline and spanking device. Having discussed the invention in general, we turn now to a more detailed discussion of the figures.

[0024] In regard to figure 1, this figure is a perspective view of a preferred embodiment of the flexible baton 1. In this embodiment the flexible baton 1 has an external sheath which is comprised of an upper panel 2 and a lower panel 3 which are sewn together at seam 4. In this preferred embodiment, the upper panel 2 and a lower panel 3 are made from 15 in. x. 3.5 in. cut fabric panels. Those skilled in the art will recognize that these panels can be made from any suitable material. However, in the preferred embodiment commercially available 500 denier Cordura(TM) fabric panels sold by Du Pont Corporation are used to fabricate the upper panel 2 and the lower panel 3. The upper and lower panels 2, 3 are preferably sewn together on three sides. The panels are then folded inside out such

that the seams are concealed inside the device, and such that the finished surface is inside the low impact baton 1, and the rougher surface is on the exterior surface of the baton 1. The rougher surface is preferred because it increases stimulation of the skin upon impact. The interior is filled with a soft batting 5 (shown below in figure 2) and the fourth side is then sealed. Due to the relatively soft nature of both the external sheath and the soft internal batting, the low impact baton 1 will not cause any damage or harm to the individual or animal being struck.

[0025] Figure 2 is a cross-sectional end view of a preferred embodiment of the low impact baton 1. As shown in this view, the external sheath, which is comprised of upper and lower panels 2, 3, is sewn together at seam 4. The inside of the low impact baton 1 is filled with a soft batting material 5. In the preferred embodiment, a commercially available 100 percent bonded polyester batting is used as the batting material 5. However, those skilled in the art will realize that any suitable soft filling material can be used as long as it performs according to the purposes of this invention.

[0026] As mentioned above, the low impact baton 1 is assembled by first sewing the upper and lower panels 2, 3 together

at their edges. In the preferred embodiment to precut panels measuring 15 by 3.5 inches are sewn together with a seam which is placed approximately 1/4 of an inch from the edge. The sewn together upper and lower panels 2, 3 are then turned inside out once the overall structure of the sheath has been formed. At this point, the sheath is open at one end. The batting material 5 is then prepared. In the preferred embodiment, the batting material 5 is fabricated from a 10 by 27 inch piece of bonded polyester batting, which is folded and inserted into the external sheath. The end of the sheath is then sewn together to secure the batting material 5 inside.

[0027] In figure 3, an alternative preferred embodiment is shown which includes, in addition to the basic components described above, an optional strap attachment. The strap attachment consists of a flap 6 which extends from the end panel 7 of the low impact baton 1. The flap 6 extends outward from the end of the low impact baton 1. The flap 6 has a grommet 8 attached to it. A retaining cord 9 is attached to the low impact baton 1 by inserting it through a grommet 8. The retaining cord 9 allows the low impact baton 1 to be more conveniently stored by providing the means to hang it from a hook or any other convenient

place. Also, it allows the low impact baton 1 to be more conveniently carried since the retaining cord 9 can be secured to the individual's wrist. In the preferred embodiment, the grommet 8 is fabricated from a No. 0 nickel/brass eyelet, and the retaining cord 9 is fabricated from a 24 inch long cord. In addition, a commercially available cord adjuster (not shown), such as a Duraflex(TM) cord adjuster, is used to secure the cord together. Those skilled in the art will recognize that the grommet 8, the cord 9, and the cord adjuster can be fabricated from any suitable material in addition to the ones discussed above.

[0028] As can be seen from the foregoing, the invention can be used for a variety of applications and provides many benefits. A principal advantage of this device is that it provides a means for tapotement massage, and/or discipline training that does not require violence or punishment. The technical description of the device and its construction is exemplary of a preferred embodiment. However, those skilled in the art will recognize that numerous other materials and fabrication techniques can be used to put together a low impact baton which functions according to the principles of this invention. Therefore, it should be understood that any suitable materials, any suitable

method of fabrication, and any suitable variance in size is intended to fall within the scope of this invention.

[0029] While the invention has been described with respect to a preferred embodiment thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes in detail may be made therein without departing from the spirit, scope, and teaching of the invention. For example, the material used to construct the tapotement device may be anything suitable for its purpose, its size and shape can vary, etc.. Accordingly, the invention herein disclosed is to be limited only as specified in the following claims.

[0030] I claim: